

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently amended) An absorbent article, comprising:

a chassis having a front waist region, a back waist region, and a crotch region extending between said front and back waist regions;

an outer cover member extending longitudinally between said front and back waist regions;

a bodyside liner extending longitudinally between said front and back waist regions;

an absorbent body structure sandwiched between said outer cover member and said bodyside liner;

said bodyside liner comprising a material having a necked base layer of a fluid permeable material, said base layer material being necked by being tensioned in a first direction;

at least a first and a second strip of elastomeric material attached to said necked base layer material with a space between said strips such that a center necked region of said base layer material is bordered on at least two longitudinally extending sides by flat, planar composite regions of said elastomeric materials and said base layer material, said center region generally aligned with said absorbent body structure; and

wherein said center region of necked base layer material is ~~attached~~ bonded directly to the immediately underlying portion of said absorbent body structure in registry with the center region of necked base layer material in its necked condition and said composite regions are stretchable in at least a second direction of said absorbent article.

2. (Original) The absorbent article as in claim 1, wherein said first and second strips of elastomeric materials are superimposed on and aligned with lateral sides of said underlying base layer material.

3. (Original) The absorbent article as in claim 1, wherein said first and second strips of elastomeric materials comprise an elastic film, said films being laminated to said base layer material such that said composite regions are neck bonded laminate regions.

4. (Original) The absorbent article as in claim 1, wherein said first and second strips of elastomeric materials are attached to said base layer material in a generally untensioned state.

5. (Original) The absorbent article as in claim 1, wherein said first and second strips of elastomeric materials are attached to said base layer material in a generally tensioned state.

6. (Original) The absorbent article as in claim 1, wherein said base layer material is tensioned in the machine direction prior to attaching said first and second strips of elastomeric materials to opposite lateral sides of said base layer material such that said bodyside liner has longitudinal strips of said composite regions that are stretchable in the cross direction bordering said center machine direction region of said necked base layer material.

7. (Withdrawn) The absorbent article as in claim 1, wherein said base layer material is tensioned in the cross direction prior to attaching said first and second strips of elastomeric materials in the cross direction to opposite longitudinal ends of said

necked base layer material such that said composite regions of said bodyside liner extend generally across said front and back waist regions of said chassis.

8. (Withdrawn) The absorbent article as in claim 1, wherein said base layer material is tensioned in the machine direction prior to attachment of said first and second strips of elastomeric materials to opposite lateral sides of said base layer material, and further comprising additional elastomeric materials attached in the cross direction to opposite longitudinal ends of said base layer material such that said composite regions of said bodyside liner extend in the longitudinal direction on each side of said center region and generally transversely across said front and back waist regions of said chassis.

9. (Original) The absorbent article as in claim 1, wherein said base layer material has been reversibly necked and creped prior to attachment of said first and second strips of elastomeric materials to opposite lateral sides of said base layer material, said base layer material being rendered stretchable such that said bodyside liner material is stretchable in the transverse direction and the longitudinal direction.

10. (Withdrawn) The absorbent article as in claim 1, wherein said bodyside liner is a separate component from said outer cover member, said bodyside liner and said outer cover member being generally coextensive and attached along side seams of said chassis, said composite regions of said bodyside liner defining longitudinal strips on each side of said center region and extending outwardly from said center region to said respective side seams.

11. (Withdrawn) The absorbent article as in claim 10, wherein portions of said composite regions of said bodyside liner are folded outboard of said absorbent body

structure so as to define longitudinally extending containment flaps on opposite lateral sides of said absorbent body structure.

12. (Previously presented) The absorbent article as in claim 1, wherein said composite regions of said bodyside liner define machine direction strips extending laterally from said center region, each of said composite regions being folded to form a folded composite region at a respective opposite side fold line of said chassis and extending laterally back under said absorbent body structure and attached to each other such that said folded composite regions also define said outer cover member of said chassis.

13. (Original) The absorbent article as in claim 12, further comprising leg elastics between said folded composite regions.

14. (Withdrawn) The absorbent article as in claim 12, further comprising elastomeric side panels attached to said chassis generally adjacent to said fold lines, said side panels attached at side seams to define a pant-like structure.

15. (Original) The absorbent article as in claim 12, wherein portions of said composite regions of said bodyside liner are folded outboard of said absorbent body structure so as to define longitudinally extending containment flaps on opposite lateral sides of said absorbent body structure.

16. (Original) The absorbent article as in claim 12, wherein said composite regions are also attached to an underside of said absorbent body structure.

17. (Original) The absorbent article as in claim 1, wherein said composite regions of said bodyside liner define longitudinal strips extending outwardly from said center region and defining elastomeric side panels that are attached at side seams of

said chassis to define a pant-like structure, said composite regions folded outboard of said side panels at fold lines and extending laterally back under said absorbent body structure and attached to each other such that said composite regions also define said outer cover member of said chassis.

18. (Currently amended) An absorbent article, comprising:

a chassis having a front waist region, a back waist region, and a crotch region extending between said front and back waist regions;

an outer cover member extending longitudinally between said front and back waist regions;

a bodyside liner extending longitudinally between said front and back waist regions;

an absorbent body structure sandwiched between said outer cover member and said bodyside liner;

said bodyside liner comprising a material having a necked base layer of a generally fluid permeable material, said base layer material being necked by being tensioned in a longitudinal direction;

a strip of elastomeric material attached to said necked base layer material along a longitudinally extending side thereof to form a flat, planar composite region and such that a region of said necked base layer material is adjacent a longitudinally extending composite region of said elastomeric material and said base layer material, said region of necked base layer material generally overlying and ~~attached~~ bonded directly to the immediately underlying portion of said absorbent body structure in registry with the center region of necked base layer material in its necked condition; and

wherein said region of base layer material remains generally non-elastic and said composite region is stretchable in at least a transverse direction in use of said absorbent article.

19. (Original) The absorbent article as in claim 18, wherein said elastomeric material is superimposed on and aligned with a lateral side of said underlying necked base layer material.

20. (Original) The absorbent article as in claim 18, wherein said elastomeric material is attached to said necked base layer material in a generally untensioned state.

21. (Original) The absorbent article as in claim 18, wherein said elastomeric material is attached to said necked base layer material in a tensioned state.

22. (Withdrawn) The absorbent article as in claim 18, wherein said composite region of said bodyside liner is folded at a side fold line of said chassis and extends laterally back under said absorbent body structure and attaches to an opposite lateral side of said region of base layer material such that said composite region also defines said outer cover member of said chassis.

23. (Withdrawn) The absorbent article as in claim 22, wherein said composite region of said bodyside liner is folded outboard of said absorbent body structure so as to define longitudinally extending containment flaps on opposite lateral sides of said absorbent body structure.

24. (Withdrawn) The absorbent article as in claim 23, wherein said composite region of said bodyside liner is folded so as to define longitudinally extending elastomeric side panels outboard of said absorbent body structure.

25. (Withdrawn) A method of producing a composite material, said method comprising:

providing a base layer of generally non-extensible material;

applying a tensioning force to the non-extensible material in a first direction to neck in the material;

superimposing and attaching a first elastomeric material along a first side of the necked non-extensible material, the first elastomeric material having a width that is less than the width of the non-extensible material;

maintaining the tensioning force on the base layer while attaching the base layer to another material such that the base material maintains its necked configuration after attachment to the other material; and

wherein a resulting composite material is formed having a region of non-extensible necked material bordered on at least one side thereof by an elastomeric region, the elastomeric region comprising a composite of the elastomeric material and necked non-extensible base layer material.

26. (Withdrawn) The method as in claim 25, further comprising superimposing and attaching a second elastomeric material along a second side opposite the first side of the necked non-extensible base layer material, the second elastomeric material having a width that is less than the width of the non-extensible base layer material, the necked non-extensible region of the resulting composite material bordered on opposite sides by a composite elastomeric region.

27. (Withdrawn) The method as in claim 26, wherein the first and second elastomeric materials comprise an elastic film, the films being laminated to the opposite

sides of the necked non-extensible base layer material such that the elastomeric regions of the resulting material are neck bonded laminate regions.

28. (Withdrawn) The method as in claim 26, wherein the elastomeric materials are attached to the necked non-extensible base layer material in an untensioned state.

29. (Withdrawn) The method as in claim 26, wherein the elastomeric materials are attached to the necked non-extensible base layer material in a tensioned state.

30. (Withdrawn) The method as in claim 26, wherein the non-extensible base layer material is tensioned in the cross direction, and the first and second elastomeric materials are attached in the cross direction to opposite longitudinal ends of the necked non-extensible base layer material.

31. (Withdrawn) The method as in claim 26, wherein the non-extensible base layer material is tensioned in the machine direction, and the first and second elastomeric materials are attached in the cross direction to opposite longitudinal ends and opposite lateral sides of the necked non-extensible base layer material.

32. (Withdrawn) The method as in claim 26, wherein the non-extensible base layer material is tensioned in the machine direction, and the first and second elastomeric materials are attached in the cross direction to opposite longitudinal ends of the necked non-extensible base layer material.

33. (Withdrawn) The method as in claim 25, wherein the other material to which the necked non-extensible base layer material is attached is an absorbent body.

34. (Withdrawn) A method of producing a bodyside liner material for an absorbent article, the material having a center region that is generally fluid permeable

and non-extensible, and opposite lateral side regions that are stretchable in the cross direction, said method comprising:

providing a layer of generally fluid permeable non-extensible material;

applying a tensioning force to the non-extensible material in the machine direction to neck in the material;

superimposing and attaching strips of elastomeric material along the lateral sides of the necked non-extensible material;

the necked non-extensible material and elastomeric material strips having respective widths such that the elastomeric material strips are spaced apart on the necked non-extensible material, and the portion of the necked non-extensible material not covered by the elastomeric material strips defines the center region; and

attaching the center region to an absorbent body while maintaining the non-extensible material in its necked condition.

35. (Withdrawn) The method as in claim 34, wherein the elastomeric material strips are joined to the necked non-extensible material in a tensioned state, the resulting lateral side regions of the bodyside liner material being stretchable in the cross direction and machine direction.